

are poised to increase trade and investment in sub-Saharan Africa.

At the same time, a strong trade and investment relationship between the countries of sub-Saharan Africa and the United States will reduce poverty and expand economic opportunity in Africa. Moreover, a stronger, more stable and prosperous Africa will be a better partner for security and peace in the region and a better ally in our mutual fight against narcotics trafficking, international crime, terrorism, the spread of disease, and environmental degradation.

Some 30 sub-Saharan countries have begun dynamic economic reform programs, including liberalizing exchange rates and prices, privatizing state-owned enterprises, ending costly subsidies, and reducing barriers to trade and investment. The African Growth and Opportunity Act is designed to complement economic reforms such as these which African nations have decided to pursue by creating greater opportunities for partnerships between Americans and Africans.

Specifically, the bill offers increased access to the U.S. market for non-import sensitive goods and increased dialogue with the United States on deepening our trade relationship. The benefits available under the bill provide incentives for the most aggressive reformers to liberalize their markets even further. This legislation would not impose new conditions for maintaining existing trade and aid benefits. However, to qualify for enhanced trade benefits, the African Growth and Opportunity Act requires that countries make continual progress toward achieving the bill's market-based criteria. For countries that choose to follow this course, the bill requires the President to develop a plan to solidify our economic partnership through the creation of a United States-Sub-Saharan African Free Trade Area.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act is strongly supported by political and economic leaders across sub-Saharan Africa. Every African Ambassador in Washington, D.C. has endorsed this bill. Never before have the 48 diverse nations in the region been united in support of such an initiative. In addition, the African Growth and Opportunity Act has a high profile throughout the continent and the response has been clear—Africans want to be trading partners with the United States and the world.

In order to continue to grow, African economies need to have enhanced access to U.S. markets, capital, management expertise, and technology. The bill is the first step toward making that happen and is a long overdue response to change led by Africans themselves across the continent. I urge my colleagues to support this historic legislation when it is considered on the House floor in the coming weeks.

**TRIBUTE TO RETIRING MISSOURI
FARMERS AND TRADERS BANK
PRESIDENT JOE W. SCALLORNS**

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, It has come to my attention that a distinguished career in the banking industry has come to an end.

Joe W. Scallorns, bank president of Farmers and Traders Bank, retired recently after over 30 years of serving Missouri's banking needs.

Scallorn's distinguished banking career began as a bank collector in Columbia, Missouri while finishing his degree as a student at the University of Missouri. After college, he joined Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York as a credit analyst. He returned to Columbia in 1967, eventually rising to the position of Vice President of the First Bank of Commerce and later as President of the First National Bank and Trust Company. He joined Eagle Bank of Highland, Illinois, as its President in 1987. In June 1988, he purchased Farmers and Traders Bank in California, Missouri.

Additionally, Joe is active in professional organizations, chairing the committees on Banking Education, Legislative Affairs, and the Political Action Committee of the Missouri Banking Association, also serving on its Board of Directors. He also served on the Government Relations Council of the American Bankers Association and its National BancPac Committee.

As he prepares for quieter time with his wife, Fran and his son, Joseph, I know all Members of Congress will join me in paying tribute to my good friend Joe Scallorns and in wishing him the best in the days ahead.

**HONORING THE HONORABLE
JUDGE AARON MENT FOR HIS
DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE
STATE OF CONNECTICUT**

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, on January 4, 1999, the Honorable Judge Aaron Ment of Fairfield, Connecticut, will retire after 14 years of dedicated service as Chief Court Administrator for the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch. I rise today to honor Judge Ment and salute his distinguished career spanning over 20 years serving the people in the State of Connecticut.

Aaron Ment's career as a judge began in 1976 when he was first appointed to the bench. Only eight years later, on September 18, 1984, Judge Aaron Ment was appointed as the Chief Court Administrator for the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch. Here Judge Aaron Ment's vision and leadership helped shape the Connecticut Judicial Branch forever.

Judge Ment's innovative foresight and ambition helped to foster a more positive working relationship between the courts and Connecticut communities. He has been diligent in improving operations and trying to better serve the people of Connecticut. The multiple innovative programs he has helped pioneer have been studied and reproduced all over the United States.

Under Judge Ment's leadership, judges and citizens have benefited from programs such as the one day/one trial jury system, an expanded prebench orientation program, a wellness program for Judges, a centralized infraction bureau and a statewide alternative incarceration program. He has also implemented special sessions of the Superior

Court, including drug sessions, truancy dockets, the complex litigation docket and a National Demonstration Program for Domestic Violence.

It is with great pleasure that I join with the friends and family of Judge Aaron Ment in congratulating him on his retirement. The State of Connecticut's Judicial Branch will feel his absence for years to come. I thank you, Aaron, for all that you have accomplished in your very distinguished career. My very best wishes to you for health and happiness in your retirement.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE EXPAND &
REBUILD AMERICA'S SCHOOLS
ACT**

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce school construction legislation that I spearheaded in the 105th Congress. The Expand & Rebuild America's Schools Act is a progressive step forward to resolve America's ever-expanding school overcrowding crisis. I was disappointed to see the 105th Congress end without the passage of meaningful school construction legislation. The President, myself, and other members of Congress offered beneficial and positive measures to renovate and improve America's schools, but we were blocked every step of the way by a Republican leadership unwilling to commit needed resources to our education agenda. I hope our new Speaker will use the opportunity of a new Congress to do more, and to prove to the American people that we care about our schools and our children.

School overcrowding remains a tremendous obstacle in my congressional district and, I am positive, all across America. The Secretary of Education annually releases a Baby Boom Echo report which highlights trends in school populations across the country. The dismal scenario we saw in the 1997 report became even more bleak in 1998. This year total public and private school enrollment will rise to a record 52.7 million, and over the next decade public high school enrollment is expected to increase by 11 percent! Twenty states will have at least a 15 percent increase in the number of public high school graduates, with a 78 percent increase projected for Nevada, 39 percent for Hawaii, and 38 percent for Florida. Largely because of the high school enrollment increase, the total number of new teaching positions for public and private high school teachers is expected to rise by 115,000—a 9 percent increase. The Secretary of Education also anticipates that 6,000 schools need to be built in the next ten years to accommodate school population increases. We can no longer ignore these facts. School overcrowding is a national dilemma that needs a nationwide solution.

The Expand & Rebuild America's Schools Act, H.R. 415, is that solution. This bill is focused, effective, and tax-payer friendly. H.R. 415 develops a pilot bond program to help our local schools save money on bond initiatives. Through the creation of a new class of bonds, the Federal Government will provide a tax credit to lenders equal to the amount of